

March 1, 1966

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission held a public hearing in Convention Hall in Alexandria on March 1, 1966 at 10 A.M., which was brought about by what is referred to as the "Jonesville Incident".

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jimmie Thompson, Chairman of the Commission Board. After a brief welcome to those in attendance, Mr. Thompson expressed his desire that each person testifying during this hearing be sure of what they said, know the facts, not to say someone told me, and "they had better tell the truth". Mr. Thompson made it clear that each person testifying would be under oath and they were to speak of their own free will - if they desired not to answer a question, they had that privilege.

Representative David I. Patton, of Jonesville, was first speaker. He stated that he was a little bit at a loss as to why this meeting was being held in Rapides Parish, but in answer to a telegram he received from Mr. Thompson, we are here to give our side of this situation from Catahoula Parish and to listen to your side.

Mr. Thompson said he had tried to contact Mr. Kyle, but had been unable to do so - that evidently he was out of State. He then asked Mr. Charles (Chuck) Buckley who was present representing Senator George Ray Lee, to speak.

Mr. Buckley: "Would like to make a brief statement first concerning why Senator Lee thought we should have a meeting on this "Jonesville Incident" and possibly why it was held in Rapides Parish. In the first

place, the Larto-Saline area affects five parishes, and we all have an interest in the lake. We are interested in problems in all parts of Louisiana. We do think if there is a particular bad law enforcement situation anywhere in the state, it is our immediate interest. We have one set of laws and as long as that is the law, we expect everyone to observe these laws.

The immediate question is whether or not as a result of this Jonesville hearing the agents were in fact reprimanded and the fishermen were complimented.

I have a series of questions: (1) Was the raid carried on in a legal way? (2) If they discovered any information that illegal activities were taking place in the Larto-Saline area, and (3) Whether or not the agents were in fact reprimanded as a result of this raid? Would like for Coburn Hood to answer these questions."

Sid Campbell came in and was welcomed by Mr. Thompson.

Coburn Hood and Rep. Patton were sworn in by Mr. Thompson.

Buckley: "Is it within Captain Gillespie's jurisdiction to lead a team of game agents into Catahoula Parish to seek violation of game laws?"

Coburn Hood: "It is."

Buckley: "Is Captain Gillespie required to notify all parish agents if he is working in that parish?"

Coburn Hood: "Not necessarily."

Buckley: "Under what conditions is he required to do that, if ever?"

Coburn Hood: "Nothing that I know in the rules that requires him to."

Buckley: "Exactly what evidence of illegal activity was discovered in this raid?"

Mr. Hood: "I would like for Captain Gillespie to answer that."

Buckley: "I first wanted to say if there is any (1) illegal activity (2) how cases were prosecuted and finally (3) what was the results?"

Captain Gillespie was sworn in by Mr. Thompson.

Buckley: (restating his question) "What evidence of illegal activity was discovered in this raid - referring to three items (1) unlicensed nets (2) illegal size mesh (3) illegal taking or possession of game fish. What evidence did you discover that any of these things were occurring?"

Gillespie: "Well all nets that we confiscated were unlicensed and untagged."

Buckley: "How many nets was that, you remember, Captain?"

Gillespie: "I am talking about gill webbing. Approximately 8,000 yards - ~~44~~ hoop nets - returned 28 of them to the people who showed receipts at the landing. We have 10 illegal hoop nets. By illegal, I mean undersize."

Buckley: "Were there any illegal game fish confiscated in this raid?"

Gillespie: "Yes, from two live bags; we also released game fish out of the illegal hoop nets."

Buckley: "As Captain in charge of this raid, would you determine the raid as a successful raid?"

Gillespie: "Yes"

Rep. Patton: "Mr. Gillespie, did you personally see game fish in these live bags? Did you personally turn them loose or did someone else release them? Who saw the fish besides you, in the live bags?"

Thompson introduces Senator Gilbert

Gillespie: "Most of the agents saw them - not all of them - also three sports fishermen were there (two from Minden - one from Shreveport) and I have letters or statements from them saying they saw them. Also, one live bag of fish was turned over to an orphan's home in Monroe, which I have a receipt for."

Rep. Patton: "How many pounds were in this bag that you took to Monroe and turned over to the orphanage?"

Gillespie: "Approximately 150 lbs."

Rep. Patton: "What happened to the other live bags, the 1000 lbs. I've been reading about in the newspaper?"

Gillespie: "The other game fish was released from the nets by four agents - from the hoop nets with leads on them."

Rep. Patton: "Were these hoop nets illegal?"

Gillespie: "Some were illegal and all were illegal in the sense that they were not tagged."

Rep. Patton: "Do you have evidence that these people in Catahoula Parish owned these illegal nets? You know people from all over fish here."

Gillespie: "Yes I do, I have five illegal hoop nets (illegal mesh with 1965 tags) which I took to the office and checked out and found who owned the nets, or I found out who the tags belonged to."

Patton: "This evidence that has been accumulated in the last few days since the meeting at Jonesville the other day -"

Gillespie: "No Sir, the evidence was there to begin with."

Rep. Patton: "Was charges filed against these people who had illegal nets?"

Gillespie: "No, not yet."

Patton: "No charges have been filed - at that point last Tuesday, we didn't know anything about charges filed against any of these."

Buckley: "One of the objectives found or indicated to be found in this Jonesville meeting Tuesday was that none of the game agents who were involved in this raid were allowed to give testimony of his evidence in the raid. Was any agent besides yourself questioned about illegal evidence he found concerning any illegal activities that were found during this raid?"

Gillespie: "The only agent that was asked anything else was Emfinger."

Buckley: "What did the question to Emfinger concern?"

Gillespie: "He was asked question of conduct during the raid."

Buckley: "What question was asked of you of what evidence you found during the raid? Were those questions asked?"

Gillespie: "No Sir."

Mr. Thompson - Giving a few remarks of welcome again at this time and Mr. Gilbert was sworn in.

Buckley: "Does the Louisiana law state that a permit must be attached to the net?"

Gillespie: "Yes"

Buckley: "Does the Commercial fishermen in that area understand if they have purchased a permit they could have written the money order number, name, and the date they purchased it in a bottle and tied this to their nets, that their nets would not have been picked up. Is this common knowledge to these fishermen?"

Gillespie: "I will answer it this way. All the agents in my

District have been instructed to tell any Commercial fisherman when he applies for his licenses if he will place his name, type licenses applied for etc. in a bottle and tie it to his net, we will recognize it until he gets his tags.

Buckley: "Concerning these licenses - we have no quarrel with these fishermen - our fight is not with them. Mr. Gillespie, how many of these fishermen had money order receipts showing that they had ordered their licenses that was dated on the day of the raid?"

Gillespie: "I only saw two money order receipts and they were produced on the day of the raid. Mr. Wiley and Mr. Deville showed me receipts showing they had ordered their licenses for \$10.00. We returned their hoop nets at that time."

Buckley: "The following Tuesday, the day of the meeting over there, how many receipts did you see at that time that were dated the day of the raid?"

Gillespie: "I haven't seen a receipt - not yet."

Buckley: "Will ask Coburn Hood about it later, I think maybe he has some receipts. On these nets that were picked up, were there any of your men that had been patrolling in the area that knew the nets were there and passed them daily prior to that raid on Saturday?"

Gillespie: "Yes Sir, I had instructed one agent to keep me posted on the activities about the nets."

Buckley: "On these nets that are illegal nets, it is my understanding that people that were raised up in this area with these Commercial fishermen, can identify net by knots in the net, Is it possible for an agent familiar with these nets to know an illegal net even if

it wasn't tagged?"

Gillespie: "I don't know."

Buckley: "In this raid were you asked of any misconduct?"

Gillespie: "No."

Buckley: "Can you think of any reason as a result of that raid that you should be ordered to stay out of Catahoula Parish?"

Gillespie: "No."

Buckley: "I understand that Senator Gilbert and Rep. Patton ordered you not to come back to Catahoula Parish. Before we have him sit down, do either of you care to ask Mr. Gillespie any questions?"

Mr. Thompson: "Would like to make ruling, if I have the authority, that the Commission is not forcing anyone to say anything and that all statements will be voluntary. This thing could be turned around - we are not a Judge or a Jury."

Mr. Thompson stressed several times that Captain Gillespie and the other agents were not on trial, and warned them that anything they said could be held against them in later court proceedings, if there should be any. Here he asked Mr. Gibson for his opinion concerning this.

Mr. Gibson: "It looks like a trial to me. You are swearing these people in and you are not using any rules of evidence. He is testifying to hear-say evidence and everything else; he could be prosecuted for any statement he made in here. Now when he is sworn in, unless the rules of evidence are used, it can not be used."

Here again Mr. Thompson warned "every man had better be telling the truth. This is not a court of law, but I want everyone to be warned that this can be used against you. Each person will be making statements

at his own free will. If you do not wish to answer, say so."

Rep. Patton still says "I am completely at a loss as to why we are here. If it is just gossip, what are we doing here?"

Mr. Thompson says "this is a meeting of facts, I will continue to swear people in and if you have something you do not want to answer, you do not have to answer. If the Commission will allow me, I will continue", The Commission gave him the authority to continue.

Rep. Patton: "In other words if something is bad, they do not have to answer. Where are we going and what are we going to accomplish?"

Mr. Thompson: "Gentlemen, if you refuse to testify, we have to make our ruling and we will have to run our Commission on the information we have."

Senator Gilbert made apologies for being late. Said he would like to ask Mr. Buckley since he said they had no quarrel with these fishermen who is the quarrel with?"

Mr. Buckley: "One main factor was to find out why they wanted to bar Gillespie from returning to Catahoula Parish. If he was barred for some specific reason, no charges have been made against Gillespie by these people that do not want him there. If these gentlemen requesting he not be allowed in the parish have anything specific against him, bring it up against him. If he shouldn't be in that parish - he shouldn't be in any parish."

Mr. Thompson stated here that they were here to find official information, if they have any.

Rep. Patton asked if similiar types of raids had been held in this area previously?

Gillespie: "I conducted one in 1964 - Director Hair asked to

answer and was sworn in by Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Hair: "Mr. Buckley, the policy of this Commission for the 18 months I have been with it, we do not have to notify anyone. Everyone of these agents here work for the State of Louisiana and do not have to report to anyone. The most successful raids are pulled by using outside people, and we have found that it is true in all law enforcement, that it is easier for an outsider to come into a parish, take evidence given to him, and spot these illegal activities. He does not have friends to consider and it makes it a lot easier. Captain Gillespie has worked with us on raids; we have used people all over this state. Gentlemen, this policy has not been changed and will not be changed as long as I am Director. If it meets with Commission approval, we will go into any parish at any time that we feel it is necessary."

Rep. Patton: "I would like to say a few remarks in reference to Mr. Hair. It seems that Mr. Hair, maybe for political reasons, is talking out of a different side of his mouth today than he was over there Tuesday. I was not the man that said Gillespie was barred from Catahoula Parish, but Mr. Hair who said that. If he is proposing now to take over as head of the Wildlife & Fisheries people and invade, raid, and tear up equipment which was licenses applied for, ignoring our honorable law enforcement in our parish, then certainly I will oppose this type of operation. I wonder Mr. Hair, if we are going to maintain such as our nation has occupied in Germany and France? Is that where we are heading today?"

Mr. Hair: "When these people came in and made accusation, Capt. Gillespie and Emfinger were called in. They denied those. I told you if any charge can be made against any of these agents, then I will investigate these charges. If there are charges proved to be true, then the necessary steps will be taken. As to the other side of my

mouth, I told you continuously, Mr. Patton, that our agents on this raid in Jonesville did not do anything illegal, and that you were not going to demand of me, nor the police jury, that we would have to submit a plan of our operations before we would come into the parish. Senator Gilbert, did I not tell you that, that I could not abide by the Police Jury made; that I would not have to contact the local agents before I sent other agents in?"

Senator Gilbert: "In my thoughts of what took place, I am going to say right now, that you told me that you would keep Captain Gillespie out of Catahoula Parish."

Mr. Hair: "That was not the question. The statement that he made and I will make again - the only point in question is that I made the statement that I would have to send outside game wardens into Catahoula Parish or any other parish in the state if I felt it was necessary."

Senator Gilbert: "I agree with that statement, that you did make that."

Mr. Hair: "We operate, we have operated, we will continue to operate, there has been no change in the policy, that at any time without notification to anybody in the parish, possibly not even notification to the District Captain, we will go into any area that we feel we are justified to go into without notification to anybody - we are not required to do this -"

At this time Mr. Thompson interrupted with explanation of the various ratings - Agents 1's, 2's, 3's and 4's.

Mr. Hair: "I do not require a lot of these raids; I do not require Coburn Hood to come to me on any of these things as long as

Coburn understands and he wants to pull a raid somewhere and he has evidence and he is right, then there are no requirements that he notify even me or anyone else if once it is done he can stand up and justify his action.

Rep. Patton: "Have you had a number of complaints in this area of the taking of game fish - in this Larto-Saline area?"

Gillespie: "Yes."

Rep. Patton: "Where from?"

Gillespie: "Throughout the State - Alexandria, Shreveport, Minden -"

Mr. Thompson also chimed in with the fact that he too had had people call him from Mr. Patton's home town telling him when or where a fish truck was leaving from and telling him they had the knowledge of in the past where fish had left, etc.. I am merely bringing out the fact that we have had calls from all over the state reporting such violations, said Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Hair: "I would like to have you make your statement in general - do not name specific people if we can help it. I do not think we would have to name individual people who makes the complaint to you."

Gillespie: "I learned along time ago not to give my source of information when I find out anything."

Rep. Patton stated here that they had never stood for or upheld any game fish violations and that they never would condone such operations.

Mr. Buckley: "Would like to commend the Director for sending agents into areas where there were complaints. Mr. Gillespie, was a raid conducted in this same area last Summer?"

Gillespie: "Yes."

Mr. Buckley: "Were the resident agents notified of that raid?"

Gillespie: "I cannot tell you about this. I was not in on it."

Mr. Buckley: "When nets were ordered to be given back to the fishermen, who received the order?"

Gillespie: "Mr. Hood and myself."

Mr. Buckley: "When order was given, do you remember how it was stated?"

Gillespie: "Mr. Hair asked me how long it would take me to get the nets together and get them back to the fishermen. I told him approximately two hours. He told me to go ahead and get personnel and vehicles and get them back. I asked where to, and Mr. Patton said to Larto Lake."

At this point Mr. Thompson recognized Mr. A. J. Bouquet.

Mr. A. J. Bouquet: "It strikes me as though, if we continue here, we may have Mr. Gillespie on trial, and that, I personally resent. At this stage of questioning, I believe it would be appropriate for this Commission and I so move that we dismiss the hearing to this state and commend and compliment the enforcement Division for having done the job they have been proposed to do. It is my belief that their responsibility has just ceased as far as investigation is concerned, and as far as that particular raid is concerned and I also think the question has been raised that whether Captain Gillespie has been ordered out of a district that has been assigned to him, I also move that that order be rescinded and would like to put that in the form of a motion and that the enforcement did perform their duty to this point and we are to commend them."

Both resolutions passed unanimously.

Charlie Hickman came forward insisting that the hearing continue so that all people interested enough to attend this meeting might find out what went on in the "Jonesville Incident."

Mr. Bouquet repeated his motion and made it clear that he wanted them to proceed with the meeting, that this was not a part of his motion.

Rep. Patton: "Who is making motion and who is doing rescinding? Is this the Commission judging on facts here this morning?"

Mr. Bouquet: "Mr. Patton, the duties of this Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and personnel are such that each individual has a duty to perform; we are to commend them for their duties for which they were asked to do. (He repeated his motion again) I had better explain that these wardens have a job to do, that they are ordered to so, they in this particular area, they made arrests, performed their duties, then it becomes a part of the court. In other words, it is up to the courts to decide who is right and who is wrong - not the Commission. That was my intent in that motion."

Mr. Jones to Rep. Patton: "My comment is, after we voted on this motion, my thought is that anyone, any citizen, who has an allegation of misconduct regarding an individual that we could have the allegation conducted by a hearing according to Civil Service laws and it is not my intent on this motion to say to you that we approve or disapprove. If there is misconduct, you can make your allegation so that your hearing can be held according to State Civil Service law."

Rep. Patton: "If there is misconduct, I would think this Commission would certainly listen to two sides of this thing before

they railroad this thing on across since it is in Rapides Parish, and these people were not invited to tell their side of it. What is the purpose of the hearing?"

Mr. Hair: "Rep. Patton, I do not think that this motion was anything that has not already been stated. I do not think in any action, as far as the raid was concerned, that my people did anything illegal, but if anyone has any charges against any agent, we have not closed doors on that. Up to this time on this motion, we are to commend them on a job well done, not close door on conduct; this investigation is still open. We will listen to anything as far as specific charges that anyone wants to bring up on any agent."

Mr. Thompson comments that any and all evidence be continued on Jonesville Incident only.

Rep. Patton: "Mr. Hair says we are going into the legal status and use legal charges made over there instead of rumors. Why are we not talking about them instead of rummers?"

(Something was said here that I could not hear)

Senator Gilbert: "Captain Gillespie stated Mr. Hair told him to return the nets of those people who showed money order receipts."

Gillespie: "I was told to return the nets, which I did. I did not see any money order receipts and I still haven't seen any."

Mr. Hood back up - Patton asked for photographs (Mr. Hood says he has them.)

Mr. Buckley to Mr. Hair: "Where did he (Gillespie) get authority to release the nets or why did he return them to these fishermen?"

Mr. Hair: "After quite a long discussion on these charges that had been made and the demand that the nets be returned - my answer on returning these nets, as far as any charges were concerned, once

they went out of the jurisdiction of the Wildlife & Fisheries, we have no further jurisdiction on these cases. It came up, well how about the District Attorney. I never tell the District Attorney what to do with his charges. I talked with the District Attorney and he told me - 'Mr. Hair, I am going to back up the game wardens. I told him I am not asking you to do away with any charges, I have not requested anyone to do away with any charges. After that someone said it would take the Judge's order. He was contacted by phone (Sheriff McGuffy got him on the phone), he turned to me and said, Mr. Hair, will you talk to the Judge? These gentlemen here (Patton & Gilbert) said these people have receipts showing they have applied for their licenses. The Judge said, Mr. Hair, any of the people that have receipts showing they have made application to the Wildlife & Fisheries for their tags, you return their licenses. As far as I am concerned, they were returned by the Judge on his orders."

Rep. Patton: "Do you have pictures? Were they taken on this raid?"

Mr. Hood: "Some of these pictures were taken after this raid of the fish taken on this raid. This series of pictures goes for several raids on Larto."

Rep. Patton: "Would like to also be sure that these pictures were taken at this raid and by your people."

Mr. Hood: "only a few by our people."

Rep. Patton continued to charge that would not justify this type action since the only charges filed were charges regarding legal webbing that was not tagged.

Senator Gilbert after asking the question if any charges were made for possession of illegal fish, and when Mr. Hood answered no, asked what good are these pictures then?

Mr. Thompson: 'The question of illegal fish - will make this statement. It had been denied that any game fish had been involved. I think I am correct in stating that it was Rep. Patton who called the radio station as well as the newspaper and denied any fish were involved. (Mr. Laborde is present and can verify this) I think Mr. Buckley is trying to say that there were fish involved and by the law they can be caught in nets but are to be released when the fishermen run their nets. The thing is that game fish were in question.

Rep. Patton: 'Those charges did not have anything to do with illegal possession of fish. There were no charges in the charges we had.

Mr. Thompson: 'You are entirely correct Mr. Patton.'

Mr. Buckley: 'What we are trying to establish is realistically you can't go in and stake out a net with a raiding team. All you can do is to prove this illegal activity is continuing. All we can do is to show violations of the law. The possibility is great that game fish was involved.

Mr. Buckley: 'The team did a good job in that area. We have not had any reason as far as we know to move Captain Gillespie from that parish.'

Rep. Patton: 'We are joining with all the people in protecting game fish, but we did not and do not have any evidence of game fish violations down there except what two wardens said this morning.'

Mr. Thompson commented that this had already been stated and requested that it not be brought up again.

Mr. Buckley: 'How many license were sold that day? Who has licenses?'

Mr. Hood: 'I have record of certified copy of all licenses of

all the people involved in this raid. I have here certified copy of all the people (4 licenses) that I issued on Tuesday in Jonesville, acting on orders from Mr. Hair."

Mr. Buckley: "These 4 licenses - were these nets given back and who ordered you to give them back?"

Mr. Hood: "I was ordered by the Director to give them back and I did."

Mr. Hair: "This same question again - after talking to the Judge, he told me to return all nets of legal size to all of the people who held receipts that showed they had ordered their licenses before the raid. Mr. Patton, I believe, said how about the two or three people who had not made applications prior to the day of the raid? I asked the Judge, what is the position of any people who had their nets picked up on Saturday and had not at that time made application to the Commission for their licenses and he repeated: Mr. Hair, anybody that pays for their licenses today, you give them a receipt and you return their legal nets."

Buckley: "Who issued these licenses?"

Hood: "Mr. Patton's secretary wrote out these receipts and I signed them."

Buckley: "What about the 600 ft. on here?"

Hood: "That 600 yards should have been feet. That notation is made at the bottom of that license and will be issued for 600 feet."

Patton: "How much did you take in that day?"

Hood: "My memory is something like \$50.00."

Patton: "How many feet of webbing?"

Hood: "8000 ft. amounting to \$400.00 of licenses - I have here the complete certified copies of all licenses ordered by the people

involved in this thing."

Mr. Thompson: "Had a phone call from Mr. Gibson, District Attorney from Jonesville, yesterday - said he would like to make this meeting if he could. Is he here?"

Rep. Patton: "Since Judge Megee has been mentioned so much today, was Judge Megee invited to this meeting?"

Mr. Thompson: "Not to my knowledge."

Mr. Bill Day: "Is it proper to go to the District Attorney and then to the Judge?" (More I could not hear)

Mr. Hood: "When we make those charges we go down to the Sheriff's Office and make out our charges, turn them over to the Sheriff, the Sheriff gives them to the District Attorney's office and the District Attorney notifies the people of the charges. Of course, there are cases that are talked over with the Judge. As far as I know, these charges were filed in the sheriff's office and were in the hands of the Sheriff.

Deputy W.A. Book: "These charges were placed on my desk early Monday morning. These affidavits were signed by Mr. Ed. Chevalier. I do not see Mr. Ed Chevalier here who signed these affidavits."

Mr. Buckley: "Repeating licenses here again trying to assure people that these men were doing their job. A number of these licenses were purchased on the day of the raid, some month and half after their licenses were due, before they made their application. I do think that the investigation agent should give close attention to the date the application was made."

James D. Letherman: "When a charge has been made, can that man continue to legally fish before his charges has been taken to the court?"

Mr. Hood: "Yes"

(Something asked here that I could not hear.)

Mr. Hood: "That is true. If I may take this liberty, as the Director told you before that I called and put men on False River and noone knew they were there; I put them on False River to pick up nets and they did just that. We have no way of knowing unless the nets are tagged. This is not uncommon. May I say to the fishermen all over this state, we have loads of Commercial fishermen, and we as agents will help these fishermen in any way we can to help them fish legally."

Rep. Patton: "One thing that complicated things, I am told by the wardens that they had been allowed a 90 day grace period to get their licenses. Is this true? Of course that is not the law, but a few minutes ago Mr. Gillespie stated if they take a receipt or piece of paper and tie it on a tree they would accept this, and this is not the law either. Actually we are under riding a grace period. Some of these licenses were bought on February 16, 19, 17, 15. We felt that these men were not justified in having these charges made, tearing up their nets etc.."

Mr. Thompson: "It has been my finding that the year in and year out Commercial fishermen are as a whole a pretty nice group of people. It is not the intent of this Commission to condemn at any time the Commercial fishermen who buys his licenses. I am giving you a statement "I think the law is the law. I hope that you will go back and tell your fishermen to purchase their license at the proper time as they should. This is all uncalled for. I will say this, I speak directly to you Mr. Patton, if there is any evidence against our people, I would not like to have it brought out at this point

but would like, if you have any, for it to be brought out in writing - then we will see that he be punished or sentenced."

Rep. Patton: "I am still at a loss as to why you don't want us to bring out here points of these individuals, these fishermen, that were abused."

Mr. Thompson: "If you are prepared and have factual evidence, then lets have it."

Mr. Hair: "Mr. Chairman, lets look into this a little bit further. According to Civil Service, if we bring an agent here and if we make accusation against him today there would be nothing this department could do as far as seeing justice if these things <sup>are</sup> brought out publically. Put these charges in writing, if there be any."

Mr. Hood: "Gentlemen of the Commission and all of you, I would like to answer two instances here regarding the 90 days grace. This is not true. Gillespie is in charge of that District. The other thing, when this webbing was picked up, the agents decided it was illegal and for that reason, the agents took it to Ferriday. There is a law that gives the Director or Commission the authority to pick this stuff up and take it to the Commission office. We are going to enforce this law without fear and without favor. The theory of this Commission is to raise much game in this state and let people shoot it. As to the Commercial fishermen having a hard time, we are aware of all their problems, but never the less the law is the law, and it is our duty to enforce the law. All of us know that tempers sometimes do flare. At this time I want to say I am proud of this uniform and I commend these agents for their part in this raid. We are going to give you the best of law enforcement and I know Rep. Patton is for us too.

We have disagreed on some things, but I am going to forget these and I'm sure he will to." (at this point was stopped by Mr. Thompson to recognize Ex Commissioner John P. Crain)

Rep. Patton: "If I assume this thing right we were called here to hear the people tell their side of this deal at Jonesville. Looks like we are not going to get to give our side of it."

Mr. Thompson: "Speaking for this Commission, we will hear your position and you so state it now."

Rep. Patton requested two fishermen come up (Mitchel Deville and Leon Laparie came forward and were sworn in by Mr. Thompson) Mr. Patton asked to hear their testimony.

Mitchel Deville: "Well, the day of the raid, I did have my receipt. I went to find these game agents to show my receipt. Saw four game agents and they ordered me to take up my nets. I could not talk to him; he was mad and made accusations. (Emfinger was the agent) He told the boy in the boat that he was going to give me a whipping. Upon showing Gillespie receipts, Gillespie gave my nets back. Evidently Emfinger called me a liar. He said he saw me take up one of the nets and take a perch out of it. He said: "You are a god damned liar" and you are going to apologize to me for calling me a liar. So I did apologize (4 agents heard this) and he ordered me to take up nets and bring them in.

Mr. Laparie, already being sworn in, was asked if this statement was true that Mr. Deville had made. He stated that it was true. Laparie was also asked if he was talked to by any of the agents and he answered "no".

Mr. Emfinger was sworn in for statement and was warned that any statement he made would be of his own free will, and of no order of the Commission. Emfinger wished to continue with his

statement and was given as follows: (Manuel Duncan was also sworn in at this same time since he was in the boat with Emfinger)

Emfinger: "These two gentlemen, Mr. Deville and Mr. Laparie, on the date of the raid on Saturday - Agent Duncan and myself were in boat together and Agent Sasser and Agent Green, had just pulled into the bank on the south side of Saline. It was dinner time and we were eating. Our boat was partly concealed in the bushes. We saw this boat pass by us, they went up into the bushes, raised two hoop nets, left there and went back into the Bayou. We came out of the bushes and followed them. They did not know we were following them. They went to a live bag and raised the live bag and were fooling with it. (we were about 300 yds. behind them). They dropped the live bag and started out of the Bayou. They tried to go by us, but saw Agent Sasser and Green (who were 200 yds. behind us) then they stopped. It is my belief that they did not intend to stop until they saw the boat behind us. We saw white perch scales and slime and questioned them about it - they said they had a buffalo, that it was buffalo scales. I definitely know that it was white perch scales and slime. He said he had not raised a net today. I told him I had seen him raise a net and he said "you are a dam lying son of bitch." When he said this, I paddled to his boat, I caught hold of his boat and told him I did not appreciate being called that and demanded an apology now, and he did apologize. I have a ticket here that I made out against Mr. Deville (fishing hoop nets with leads on them). I made out this ticket, citation and I charged him with taking game fish illegally, fishing hoop nets illegally in Saline Bayou. I told him to take his nets up. He did not have the nets tagged. Agent Sasser and Green

was asked to look at the live bag. Agent Duncan and myself and Deville and Laparie went back to his nets, raised them and while we were doing this the other agents raised the live bags and they had approximately 150 lbs. of game fish in them, bass and white perch.

Mr. Thompson stated: "I am still at a loss as to what to say. This statement of yours has been made publicly and at your own free will."

Emfinger: "Would like to say that these two gentlemen made a false statement - for what reason, I don't know, but they are strictly liars."

Mr. Thompson asked for Duncan's statement and Mr. Duncan replied "Same statement as his."

Rep. Patton said he wanted to question Emfinger.

Mr. Gibson: "I have handled many Civil Service cases and I can tell you this, when you go before the Civil Service Board, you had better be specific and be prepared. We have no right as the Wildlife & Fisheries Commission to pass on the innocence of an individual. The only one who gives the charge is the District Attorney, we can't charge a man; we have absolutely no authority to do so. If some charges are made against him, we will go ahead and process it through the Civil Service Commission, but we can't stay before this Commission and try him here. We have no right to do so.

Mr. Thompson letting Gillespie speak -

Gillespie: "I also told him to come down and talk to me. I released his webbing (Deville & Laparie). We thought we saw the man, so therefore we did not file charges on him about the game fish."

Mr. Buckley: "It is Captain Gillespie who was ordered out of the parish. Why are we trying the other?"

Rep. Patton: "This 150 lbs. of game fish taken to the orphanage, If this is the only gish that we have any evidence whatsoever of - (I could not hear this at the meeting or on the tape)

Mr. Thompson made some comments again and let Monroe Hickman come to the mike.

Monroe Hickman: "I am hard of hearing and wondered if maybe it has already been discussed, were there any game fish taken out of the hoop nets?"

Mr. Thompson told him that it had already been discussed, and requested that Mr. Hickman have some of his friends in the audience explain this to him and requested that the hearing move on.

Frank Adams: "It has been stated by everyone that Captain Gillespie was acting within his rights. Why was he suspended from Catahoula Parish?"

Mr. Thompson: "This Commission has voted unanimously that he not be suspended.

Mr. Adams: "Mr. Hair, you did order Gillespie out of Catahoula Parish, did you not?"

Mr. Hair: "Gentlemen quite some time ago we had a letter from Rep. Patton who stated that the majority of people in Catahoula Parish did not like Gillespie and did not want him in Catahoula Parish, and for that reason, trying to keep down any incidents as far as bloodshed, was asked to stay out of Catahoula Parish. He did not give up the supervision of anyone in this parish. The request

that the local agents be able to handle the parish completely and bypass Gillespie - that was denied. They were informed they would still go through Captain Gillespie for purchases, expense accounts as they had done in the past."

Mr. Adams: "You thought Gillespie did a commendable job, yet on Thursday, you ordered him to stay out of Catahoula Parish. How can you justify these actions?"

Mr. Hair: "The only way I can justify it is this - I have made the statement, and although without a doubt through no fault of his, Gillespie may have difficulty in getting his point over exactly without seeming gruff, but as far as hard work and loyalty, I don't know of anyone I would put above him. When you see the large group of people who did not want him there - then I have to make a decision of what is best for Captain Gillespie and what is best for the Commission. We had a situation that at that particular time I did not think would warrant putting him into that might bring any physical danger to him."

Mr. Adams: "Am I right in assuming enforcement is his career? Has Gillespie asked you to take him out of Catahoula Parish? Haven't you had agents in such danger before? I do not understand why you did this. If this action is not clarified you want have an agent. We have in this state a constitution (wild in spots) but this constitution is the law of this state. I would suggest that the legislators, if this constitution is wrong, change it."

Mr. Thompson comments primarily affirming Gillespie's position.

Mr. Buckley: "My understanding was that on Monday night the

fishermen understood what had happened. My understanding is that they have the best Sheriff's Department in the state in Catahoula Parish. I understand that enforcement agents were threatened. It is my understanding that is against the law. Some investigation should be started to find out who threatened or made accusations against these agents."

Patton tried to bring in other instances that had happened, but was stopped by Mr. Thompson who stated this was limited to the Jonesville situation.

Adams: "Would like to know the majority who has threatened game wardens in Catahoula Parish."

Rep. Patton: "There is no majority in Catahoula Parish who wants all game wardens run out of Catahoula Parish. The majority wants game laws enforced, wants coordination with our game offices like it should be."

Willie B. Phillips: (Directed to Mr. Hair) "In keeping Agent Gillespie out of the parish, were you working under the orders of any individual - if so who was that individual?"

Mr. Hair: "This request came in the form of a letter from the Police Jury some time ago."

Mr. Thompson: "Do you have reference to the Governor of our state? If so, I can answer this question - no he did not."

Mr. Hair: "I had not received direct orders from the Governor, I have not received direct orders from anybody's office." (Mr. Hair went back to another incident while Julius Book was Chief of enforcement ) and again Mr. Thompson had to put the hearing back to the Jonesville incident only - meeting continued.

Mr. Hair: "At the Jonesville meeting I acted as I thought was best for the department and taking into consideration the amount of people we had there, I did what I thought was best. We have had this whole thing under investigation. We heard people who were not satisfied with Gillespie and with other agents as well. I think it best he not go in there.

Mr. Roy of Marksville: (Read letter he was sending to Governor McKeithen and the Commission as follows:)

Gentlemen: "As governor and Chief law enforcement officer of Louisiana, and as supervisory members of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission respectively, please be advised that I am reliably informed that the recent "Catahoula Game Fish Incident" occurred on Saline Lake, which forms part of the northern boundary of Avoyelles Parish.

Assuming that some of the alleged violations did occur in these parish border waters, under the provision of Revised Statutes 56:522, these violations have occurred within the criminal jurisdiction of Avoyelles Parish.

As District Attorney, I shall be happy to cooperate with you in this matter and that I shall accept criminal charges from any credible game agents and or witnesses.

Regardless of the responses to this letter, I shall ask the Avoyelles Parish Grand Jury to inquire into this matter shortly, as I represent thousands of sportsmen and commercial fishermen who are interested in game and fish conservation, and who are opposed to its distruction by both poachers and "favored hunters and fishermen."

Mr. Thompson asking for other speakers if they had something

to say - Mr. Hickman wished to ask Mr. Hair who accompanied him on the trip to Ferriday and who gave him his orders. Was this a public meeting or a group of people, and do you think this was a wise thing to make this decision?"

Mr. Hair: "The first I knew of this incident was on Monday afternoon. I had been out of State. I was called by Aubrey Young and Aubrey told me that the Governor John J. McKeithen would like for me to go to Jonesville with him tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock and make an investigation and that is as far as instructions from the Governor's office went. The following morning I went to the airport; I called the Governor on the phone and asked if he had instructions for me? He said, "I want you to go up there and make an investigation and let me know what you find out. That was as far as his instructions went."

Mr. Hickman: "Was it an open meeting?"

Mr. Hair: "At all times we had anywhere from 10 to 12 to 15 people. I could not have investigation with my people and with this number of others. The only thing I was trying to find out was to find out if my people had done anything illegal. My position was stated that day. As to why I made this order - I arrived at this decision because I thought at that time it was for the good of everyone concerned."

O'Hearn Mathews: "Was this tension brought about because he was not enforcing the law or why was it brought about?" (Question was over-ruled)

Mathews: "Was there a pre-trial?"

Mr. Hair: "No pre-trial, no there was no trial at anytime."

Mathews: "Who were the people discussing this situation?"

Mr. Hair: "What we were discussing was with Police Jury members, Senators, Representatives, District Attorney and Sheriff - Mr. Hood was in and out. I was holding investigation to see if our people had done anything illegal. Gillespie was not sent out of that parish for anything he had done. The only information that we have, when I determined that my people had not done anything illegal whatsoever-was stopped by Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Dyer: "The passed resolution - does that mean that Mr. Gillespie be allowed to go back into Catahoula Parish?"

Mr. Thompson: "Yes, this has already been discussed. He will continue his position as law enforcement agent in that parish."

Senator Gilbert: "I represent Catahoula Parish and whether you like it or not, I have taken a position and I am going to stick by it. If theres anyway I can exert any political pressure, I am going to ask that Gillespie continue to be kept out of Catahoula Parish for two purposes (1) for own safety and (2) for the safety of my people in Catahoula Parish. I did not ask now, will not ask tomorrow or the next day that any charges be withdrawn from any game violation whatsoever - if they have been caught with illegal fish or shooting of a doe deer, but I still feel that Gillespie should be kept out of Catahoula Parish. That is the position I have taken, will continue to take, and I told Mr. Gillespie last Tuesday that I thought he is legally right in making this raid but morally wrong."

Rep. Patton: "I will try to reinterate what Senator Gilbert just said and maybe add a point or two. We want to protect our game and fish and I just wonder if some of this stems from someone in Rapides Parish. While we have preserved ours in Catahoula Parish, and I go back to say that this meeting is completely in the wrong place. It occurred in Catahoula Parish and it should have been held there. Problems on parish level should be worked out in that parish. I will go along with Senator Gilbert that I will do everything in my power to keep Gillespie out of Catahoula Parish. We have been asked to keep him out of Catahoula Parish for a number of reasons. (shooting incidences, brutally enforcing laws and a number of things that I can't go into at this meeting."

Mr. Thompson: "If these things exist that you say exist, it is your duty to bring such charges against him. I would like to put this in the form of a demand, if you have any evidence of wrong doing, that you call this to our attention.

Mr. Buckley: "Catahoula Parish is a part of Louisiana, would like to tell Senator Gilbert and Rep. Patton there is no animosity towards Catahoula Parish. If they knew of violations in Rapides Parish and wanted to send a raiding team, we would thank them for doing their job. This whole thing could have been heard without all of this. I do want to thank you for Senator Lee and we are glad to help them in Catahoula Parish uphold the law."

Mr. Fairchild: "I think to clarify their duties, Mr. Chairman, I propose that we make it crystal clear that this Commission stands for effective, fair, equal and impartial wildlife law enforcement in Louisiana. We should also make it plain that it is our intention

to see that the fish and game laws of this state are and will be vigorously enforced in order that our rich wildlife resources may be protected for the proper use and enjoyment of all the people.

In order to do this, it is occasionally necessary to shift wildlife agents from one parish or area to another on a temporary basis to cope with special game law enforcement problems. This has been a practice in the past and it is proposed that it be continued in the future through the adoption of a written policy.

Mr. Chairman, I make a motion (1) that the Chief of the Enforcement Division be authorized to work on a statewide basis and to shift wildlife agents between parishes and enforcement districts in the state for temporary work assignments as deemed necessary for the purpose of coping with special wildlife law enforcement problems (2) that the Wildlife Agent IV's be authorized to work anywhere within the two Districts that each supervises and that they be authorized to shift agents between these districts or parishes within the two districts for temporary work assignments incountering special law enforcement problems (3) that the Wildlife Agent III's or District Captains be authorized to work in any parish within their respective districts and that they be authorized to shift wildlife agents between parishes within their respective districts for the purposes of coping with special wildlife law enforcement problems.

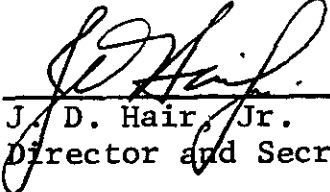
This motion was seconded by Hobson Norris and carried.

Mr. Thompson: "I have tried to conduct this meeting on a fair and impartial basis etc.."

Mr. Bill Day: "I do not plan to reinterate, I want to commend though what Mr. Hood said, and I also want to commend the agents for the job they did." (He said more but I was unable to hear what was said.)

Someone in the audience stated they would like to thank the Stream Control Commission for what they had done on the pollution problem.

Mr. Thompson still held the meeting only to the Jonesville Incident and the motion was made and seconded that the meeting adjourn.

  
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J. D. Hair, Jr.  
Director and Secretary